Unit .29

Session .03

Trusting in the Gospel of Jesus

Scripture

Romans 1:16-17; 3:23; 5:8-11; 6:23; 10:9-13

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: **The righteous will live by faith.** … **23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; … **8** But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. **10** For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. **11** And not only that, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation. … **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. … **9** If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. **11** For the Scripture says, **Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame**, **12** since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. **13** For **everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved**.

Intro Options

Main Point:
The gospel is the good news that God has provided salvation to sinners through Jesus.

Option 1

In the game "Two Truths and a Lie," someone shares two truths and one lie about his or her life, then the rest of the group has to decide which statement they think is the lie. Today, you will play a slightly different version of this game with your students.

Give each student an index card or a sheet of paper and a writing utensil. Instruct them to write on two truths about the gospel and one "lie." The lie shouldn't necessarily be a falsehood, but something non-essential to the gospel. For example, they might write, "Jesus died to save us. We are given Jesus' righteousness. We must obey our parents." Obeying our parents is a good thing, and we should do it, but it's not an essential part of the gospel, thus this would be the "lie."

Once the students have written their truths and lies, ask them to share their truths and lie with each other. (Alternate idea: you can have each student put their index card in a hat or basket, then draw a card out one at a time at random). Ask the rest of the group to state which things they think are essential (the truths) and which are extraneous (the lie). Explain that in today's lesson, Paul will lay out the five "truths" of the gospel.

Option 2

Have your students line up in random order (one way you have them line up might be by hand size, from smallest to largest; they'll have to hold their hands up palm-to-palm for comparison).

Once they are in random order, tell them their next task is to pick a number between 1 and 10; the first person in line gets to pick first, the second gets to pick second, and so on. Students may not pick the same number someone else picked until all ten digits have been picked (so the eleventh person to pick can start over).

Their final task is to create a "X Steps to the Gospel" or "X Steps on How to Get Saved" list, where X is the number they chose between 1 and 10. They are to teach the true, Bible gospel, but obviously the lower numbers will have to choose their steps more wisely, and the longer numbers will have to be careful not to introduce unnecessary steps. If kids are having troubles, they may work together (maybe you could pair the students who came up with the same number together).

Let them share their lists when they are finished. Who had the hardest time? Who had the easiest time? Which numbers seemed to produce the best lists? How many steps would they list to share the gospel? In today's lesson, we'll look at five distinct steps that Paul lays out for the gospel in Romans.

TEACHING PLAN

Read Romans 1:16-17.

Younger children often form friendships through playing games together. Older kids often make friends through conversations. Teenagers create strong bonds with one another as they share their thoughts, desires, dreams and struggles.

- **Think about your best friend. What made you close?**

Friends are close because unity exists in their relationship. They are loyal to one another and hold each other accountable. They also often enjoy doing many of the same things like watching the same movies, laughing at the same jokes, and listening to the same music. These same principles apply for the church. Despite being made up of different kinds of people, the church is brought into unity based what we have in common: the gospel of Jesus and the Spirit's work in our lives.

Paul was a former Jewish religious leader who persecuted and killed Christians. After Paul experienced the power of God, he became a bold missionary who planted churches made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Through the cross, Jesus is able to save all sinners who trust in the Lord Jesus, no matter their ethnicity.

However, sometimes the differences between people in the church can create division that hinders the mission of the church. When we live selfishly and the church is divided, we appear no different from the rest of the world. But when we live in unity, sacrificially serving one another in love, the world clearly sees the difference Christ makes in our lives.

- **How should the church look differently than the rest of the world?**

No person, Jew or Gentile, can ever be righteous on our own. We all need the grace available only through Jesus, and we're made righteous only according to the faith God gives to each one of us. As a Pharisee, Paul had failed to understand the gospel, so he persecuted the church. But as a believer, he now saw the truth about Jesus. He was not ashamed because the gospel was the only way for him and all who believe to be reconciled to God.

Read Romans 3:23; 5:8; 6:23.

The Jews and Gentiles looked down on one another, but Paul made it clear for both that "there is no one righteous" because "all have turned away" from the living God (Rom. 3:10-18; Ps. 14:1-3; Eccl. 7:20). We all stand condemned and separated from God's blessings. No one lives up to God's standard of righteousness. We all fall short, and there is a penalty for our sin. "The wages of sin is death" (6:23), and we are absolutely "helpless" to make up for our sins (5:6).

But God, who loves in a way only He can, sent Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners (Ps. 63:3; Rom. 5:8). In love, Jesus substituted Himself on the cross for both Jews and Gentiles so that our sins could be forgiven and we would be reconciled to God and one another.

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
The gospel is the good news that God has provided salvation to sinners through Jesus.

Romans 1

1:16-17 "The second clause in v. 16 explains ('for') why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel. For this gospel, whose content is Jesus Christ, 'appointed Son-of-God-in-power' (v. 4), mediates 'the power of God leading to salvation.' The term 'power,' as one might expect, is used widely in Greek philosophy and religion,13 but its NT background is undoubtedly to be sought in the OT teaching about a personal God who uniquely possesses power and who manifests that power in delivering (Exod. 9:16; Ps. 77:14–15) and judging (Jer. 16:21) his people."[1]

"The NT as a whole uses "salvation" and its cognates with much of the same broad range of meaning as the OT, whereas Paul uses the words only of spiritual deliverance. 'Salvation' often has a negative meaning—deliverance from something—but positive nuances are present at times also, so that the term can denote generally God's provision for a person's spiritual need. Particularly, in light of Rom. 3:23 and the use of 'save' in 8:24 (cf. vv. 18–23), 'salvation.' ... Verse 17 shows why (see again the 'for') the gospel is God's saving power to everyone who believes (v. 16b): 'in it [the gospel], the righteousness of God is being revealed.' The verb translated 'is being revealed' is an important biblical term. Meaning originally 'uncover,' this verb and its cognate noun, 'revelation,' are typically used by Paul to refer to the eschatological disclosure of various aspects and elements of God's redemptive plan. Sometimes this disclosure is an 'uncovering' to the intellect of various truths relating to God's purposes. But in other places, picking up the language and concepts of Jewish apocalyptic, Paul uses the word to denote the 'uncovering"'of God's redemptive plan as it unfolds on the plane of human history."[2]

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 64, DDG)

The Gospel

The Bible teaches that the gospel is both an event and a story. First, it is an event that took place at a specific point in history, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the redemption of sinners (1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5:21). Second, the gospel is also the story of redemption that God has planned since "before the foundations of the earth" (Eph. 1:4), which runs through Scripture, and which culminates in a restored and redeemed creation—a new heaven and new earth where sin, death, and suffering will never again plague humanity, and God's people will live with Him forever (Isa. 25:8; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21). The event and story do not exist apart from or in conflict with one another, but together inspire us to a life of devotion and mission.

TEACHING PLAN

- **How does the love of God compare with any other kind of love?**

Through faith in Jesus, our sin is placed on Jesus who was nailed to the cross and His righteousness is given to us (Rom. 5:12-21). Our sin is erased by His blood, and because of His sacrifice, sin is rendered powerless, death is defeated, and the evil one is dethroned in our lives (Col. 2:14-15). Whereas we were once enslaved to sin, now we are free to live for the glory of God.

- **How would you explain our need for forgiveness to someone who was not a follower of Jesus?**

Read Romans 5:9-11; 10:9-13.

Our sin deserves God's wrath, and if not for the cross, we would remain relationally separated from God. But through faith in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles are given what we could not earn—the righteousness of Jesus, which makes us right in God's sight.

Because of our sin, Jews and Gentiles were God's enemies, yet Jesus died to transform us into God's children, brothers and sisters in Christ. The basis of unity among all people is our shared need of God's grace, righteousness, and reconciliation. Through Jesus, God has reconciled Jews and Gentiles to Himself and to one another. Therefore, disunity, ethnocentrism, and prejudice are "deviating from the truth of the gospel " (Gal. 2:14).

Everyone who believes—Jew or Gentile—and calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved (Joel 2:32). The gospel unites people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. Let's join God by being missionaries to all people and agents of reconciliation. This is what God's new community looks like. This is what the power of the gospel creates.

- **What causes separation or division among people today? How does the gospel overcome these?**
- **What is confession? Why is it necessary for salvation?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
The gospel is the good news that God has provided salvation to sinners through Jesus.

Romans 10

"Paul is also well known as an apostle to the Gentiles, the missionary theologian who preached the "Good News" to Gentiles in the cities of the Roman world and developed a controversial policy whereby Gentile converts were not required to adopt Jewish customs such as male circumcision or kosher food-laws . . . . The creation of new communities of Jews and Gentiles in Christ was central to Paul's purpose and to his understanding of history, since he identified here the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and a sign of hope for Israel."[3]

Activity

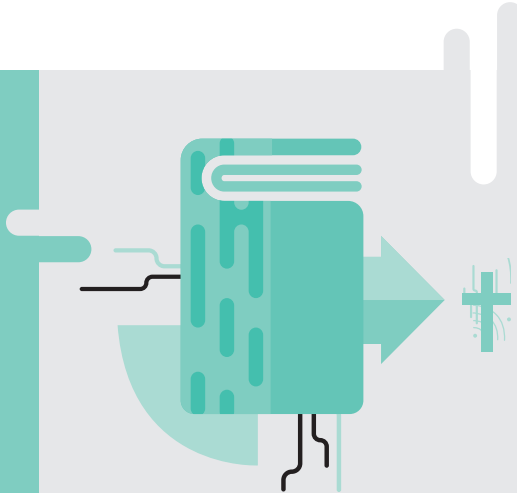
As a large group, write on the whiteboard an abbreviated form of the five truths of the gospel laid out in the lesson today. Then break them into five small groups. Ask a random student to make someone up: it could be a relative, a stranger, another student at school, an athlete, a musician, etc. Whomever they pick, the rest of the group should now imagine they are trying to share the gospel with that person.

To do so, they are going to "relay" the gospel just like relay runners pass the baton in a race. Assign each group a number between 1 and 5. You can either draw the numbers before anyone begins their explanation and let students prepare their speeches ahead of time, or you can have them improv it by drawing the numbers and making them go right away (either way, use the diagram you earlier drew on the whiteboard for reference). Go through the five steps. If the students do a good job and you want to, repeat the exercise with a new audience to see what should change and what should stay the same.

Debrief the exercise by asking how students can use these five steps to share the good news of Jesus with someone this week. You could also ask how these five gospel truths help them with situations in their lives: feeling unaccepted, feeling insignificant, wanting to be perfect, getting along with friends, struggling on the athletic field, etc. These truths are precious in Christians' lives and in non-Christians' lives!

(p. 66, DDG) Christ Connection

God's righteousness is revealed through the gospel. Because of sin, all deserve death and separation from God, but God provided Jesus to be our substitute, to pay our sin penalty, to remove our sin, and to provide His righteousness in its place. All who trust in Jesus will be saved.



TRUSTING IN THE GOSPEL

Romans 1:16-17, 3:23, 5:8-11, 6:23, 10:9-13

TRUSTING IN THE GOSPEL

The gospel is the good news that God has provided salvation to sinners through Jesus.

JESUS CONNECTION

This is the gospel: because of sin, all deserve death and separation from God, but God provided Jesus as our substitute, to pay our sin penalty, to remove our sin and to provide His righteousness in its place. All who trust in Jesus will be saved and brought into a right relationship with God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

FORGIVENESS – Erasing a debt that another person owes me.

HEAD

What do we deserve as a punishment for our sin (Romans 6:23)? Why?

What does God promise to those who confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that He rose from the dead?

HEART

Can forgiveness ever be earned? Why or why not? If we cannot earn forgiveness, how does God offer it to us?

Why is it easier to forgive someone you like than someone you hate? Jesus loved us enough to die for us, His enemies, so that we can be forgiven. What does His sacrifice reveal about how God wants us to forgive?

HANDS

Consider this parable: *When someone hurts us, it's like being handed a large rock. We can carry the rock with us, bearing the heavy load. This is holding on to anger/resentment/bitterness. We can throw the rock back at them. This is revenge. Or we can set the rock down and leave it behind. This is forgiveness. We cannot choose whether someone hands us a rock. But we alone get to choose what we do with it.*

Think of someone you are struggling to forgive. Cut a large rock shape out of paper or construction paper and write on it what that person did to you. Consider your three choices: carry it, throw it, or set it down. Pray and ask God to help you set it down and forgive, in the same way that God has forgiven you because of Jesus. Rip the paper rock up and throw away the pieces to show that you have chosen to forgive.